

NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

Proposed Site

September 2008

U.S. SMELTER AND LEAD REFINERY, INC. | **East Chicago, Indiana**
Lake County

Site Location:

U.S. Smelter and Lead Refinery, Inc. (USS Lead) is located on a 79 acre tract of land in East Chicago, Lake County, Indiana.

Site History:

USS Lead operated as a lead refining facility from 1920 to 1972. From 1972 to 1973, USS Lead was converted to a secondary lead smelter. In 1985, USS Lead ceased operations. USS Lead filed for bankruptcy in 1987. EPA proposed USS Lead to the NPL on February 7, 1992. After the 1992 proposal to the NPL, EPA determined that the USS Lead facility would be best addressed by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) program. On November 18, 1993, EPA issued an Administrative Order on Consent to USS Lead under RCRA 3008(h) authority. In 2004, lead was detected in residential soils to the north of USS Lead. In 2006, RCRA referred the residual lead contamination in the facility wetland to Superfund due to USS Lead's inability to pay for any additional cleanup work. EPA is now re-proposing for the NPL those portions of the USS Lead facility and areas where contamination from USS Lead has come to be located which were not addressed under RCRA.

Site Contamination/Contaminants:

USS Lead disposed of blast furnace slag on the plant property and in the wetland which covers approximately 21 acres of the southern part of the USS Lead property. USS Lead also discharged blast furnace non-contact process cooling water into the Grand Calumet River. Lead has been detected in the wetlands on the USS Lead property. Lead has also been found in residential soils to the north of USS Lead.

Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:

The lead contamination poses a threat to nearby residents. The lead contamination also poses a threat to the wetland on the USS Lead property which is the habitat for two state designated endangered species, and the Grand Calumet River Corridor.

Response Activities (to date):

Beginning in 1993, at the request of EPA, USS Lead removed the baghouse dust waste piles for off-site disposal. USS Lead constructed a landfill on the property for the remaining waste piles. The remaining waste piles have been placed in the landfill, and USS Lead will continue to monitor and maintain this landfill. In June 2008, EPA began removing lead contaminated soil from approximately 15 residential properties located near the USS Lead facility.

Need for NPL Listing:

The State of Indiana referred the site to EPA because lead has been detected in nearby residential soils and in the wetland that may pose a risk to human health and the environment. Other federal and state cleanup programs were evaluated but are not viable at this time, because USS Lead is bankrupt, and the state does not have the resources to investigate and clean up lead contamination. EPA has received a letter of support for placing this site on the NPL from the state.

[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination.]